



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 2
290 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

MAY 31 2016

Concerned Parents of Red Hook Park Users
c/o Elliott Ingerman
143 Reade Street, 12A
New York, NY 10013

Dear Concerned Parents:

Thank you for your letter of March 1, 2016 regarding the schedule for the EPA removal action on Ball Fields 5 through 9, which are currently closed, and your children's safety when using the open fields at Red Hook Park. Although some of you have been present for updates provided by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) and the EPA during public meetings on March 10 and May 3, 2016, we write to include an update and address the concerns in your letter.

Your letter requests that the three-year schedule for the removal action be re-evaluated. It is important to understand that this time frame includes a number of steps that are necessary components of the removal action process under EPA oversight and a public project in New York City, and are essential to meet stringent health and safety requirements for working with contaminated soil. The removal action will be a large construction project covering more than 7.5 acres of city-owned public land, and is not a simple project. All current features of the ball fields, including utilities, walkways, fencing, curbing, footings, benches, turf and several trees, will need to be removed and replaced while ensuring minimal impact to the urban surroundings. As required by the EPA, the removal action will address stakeholder and community concerns, including the use of artificial turf and careful consideration of storm water management.

There will be two main phases for the removal action: design and construction. Both phases of the project will require field work, necessitating health and safety plans for EPA approval, to ensure that such work involving hazardous substances is completed safely with minimal impact to the community. The design is essential to ensure compliance with EPA standards and New York City regulations. NYC Parks has already retained a design contractor, which has been approved by EPA, and has begun work on the design. Procurement of subcontractors for the design will be necessary. Following the procedures required by EPA and the City of New York for a removal action in a public space, the design must be reviewed and approved by EPA as well as the New York City Public Design Commission. Permit applications must also be completed and approved by various city departments. NYC Parks estimates a time frame of nine months for the design phase.

Once the design is completed and approved, the construction work must be contracted, which can be a lengthy process even when expedited. The contract for the construction work must be written by NYC Parks, reviewed by the New York City Department of Law, bid out to contractors, and reviewed, approved, and registered by the New York City Comptroller. A detailed Construction Plan, including a work schedule, must be completed and approved by EPA. Finally, construction for the project will include completing site setup and installation of security measures, mobilization of heavy equipment, demolition of all structures, limited excavation of soil, construction of infrastructure, capping of the entire area, installation of park features and trees, preparation of fields, inspections and surveying. The

entire removal action will be staggered, in that the construction for Ball Field 9 will occur once all work on Ball Fields 5-8 is completed and these fields are reopened for use. NYC Parks estimates that construction for each of these phases will take 12 to 18 months.

The process discussed above is necessary to meet the highest quality and safety standards, and to permanently address on-site smelter contamination while improving the valuable community asset that is Red Hook Park. The schedule for the removal action has been proposed by NYC Parks and approved by the EPA. It is a high priority for the EPA to complete this action in a timely manner, and the agreement between EPA and NYC Parks requires adherence to a specified schedule. That agreement is in the final stages of approval; however, despite its status, the work it requires is already proceeding, including EPA's approval of the design contractor and investigative work which will inform the design.

The EPA and NYC Parks will be holding a public meeting in early summer 2016 to discuss these steps and the removal action schedule in more detail. The date for the meeting has not been finalized, but we will make sure you receive a copy of the meeting announcement ahead of time.

In regards to your concerns about fields that remained open, since receipt of your letter, NYC Parks has notified park users of additional field closures. At present, Soccer Fields 2 and 3 are closed until NYC Parks takes permanent action to clean up these fields. Soccer Fields 4 and 5 as well as Ball Fields 1 through 4 are temporarily closed while an interim action to increase grass cover, and therefore reduce exposure to soil, takes place. Soccer Fields 1 and 6 will remain open until a long-term cleanup action can be completed. While contamination of these fields is unrelated to the historic smelter that is the subject of the EPA removal action, and therefore is being conducted independently by NYC Parks without direct EPA oversight, the EPA concurs with NYC Parks' approach to address the contaminated fields. Based on a health-based risk assessment of the EPA's sampling results, the EPA also concurs with keeping Soccer Fields 1 and 6 open for the time being.

As the EPA removal action focuses on Ball Fields 5 through 9, questions and comments regarding the actions for all areas of Red Hook Park outside of Ball Fields 5 through 9 should be directed to NYC Parks. The public may submit questions through the Capital Project Tracker, which can be found at <https://www.nycgovparks.org/planning-and-building/capital-project-tracker>. NYC Parks is working to establish an online forum for information about the pending cleanup and will provide information about the website when it is available.

We hope the above information is helpful and hope you will attend the public meeting in early summer 2016. The EPA will continue providing updates and information via public meetings, fact sheets and the website for the project (<https://www3.epa.gov/region02/superfund/removal/columbia/>). Please distribute this letter to all who were signatories of the original letter.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at (212) 637-4390 have your staff contact Margaret Gregor, On-Scene Coordinator, at (732) 321-4424.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Walter E. Mugdan", is written over a horizontal line.

Walter E. Mugdan, Director
Emergency & Remedial Response Division